

AU/ACSC/079/2000-04

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE POLITICS OF THE AIR CAMPAIGN
A TROUBLED MARRIAGE

by

Ellwood P. ("Skip") Hinman IV, Major, USAF

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

Advisor: Lt Col Brian M. Bjornson

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 2000

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for Public Release
Distribution Unlimited

20010924 092

DISTRIBUTION A:

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Air Command and Staff College
Maxwell AFB, Al 36112

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US government or the Department of Defense. In accordance with Air Force Instruction 51-303, it is not copyrighted, but is the property of the United States government.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
DISCLAIMER	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
INTRODUCTION: "IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH"	1
MILITARY EXPECTATIONS: "THE PRENUPTIAL"	2
Campaign Planning	2
Conflict Execution	3
War Termination	5
Military Expectations Models	6
THE POLITICS OF DESERT STORM: "A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN?"	10
Campaign Planning	10
Conflict Execution	12
War Termination	14
THE POLITICS OF ALLIED FORCE: "THE HONEYMOON'S OVER"	17
Campaign Planning	17
Conflict Execution	19
War Termination	22
POLITICAL TENDENCIES: "A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE"	24
Political Involvement during the Air Campaign	24
Objectives-to-End-State Loop	26
Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War	27
Gradual Escalation	28
POTENTIAL REMEDIES: "TO LOVE, HONOR, AND OBEY"	31
Political Involvement during the Air Campaign	31
Objectives-to-End-State Loop	33
Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War	34
Effects-Based Targeting	36
Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Spectrum of Conflict	37
An Airman's Advice	38
Toward an Aerospace Doctrine for Limited War	39

CONCLUSION: "TIL DEATH DO US PART"	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42

Illustrations

	<i>Page</i>
Figure 1. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Military Expectations).....	6
Figure 2. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Military Expectations).....	7
Figure 3. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Military Expectations).....	8
Figure 4. DESERT STORM Objectives	12
Figure 5. ALLIED FORCE Objectives.....	19
Figure 6. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Political Tendency).....	25
Figure 7. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Political Tendency)	26
Figure 8. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Political Tendency)	27
Figure 9. The Weinberger Doctrine	29
Figure 10. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Potential Remedy)	32
Figure 11. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Potential Remedy)	33
Figure 12. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Potential Remedy).....	35
Figure 13. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Effects-Based Targeting).....	36
Figure 14. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Spectrum of Conflict	38

Abstract

The levels of political involvement during the campaign planning, conflict execution and war termination of two recent air campaigns, DESERT STORM and ALLIED FORCE, were quite divergent from the levels of policy commensurate with military expectations. While the politics of Operation ALLIED FORCE indicate some enduring political tendencies, though, levels of political involvement during the Gulf War reveal some promising potential remedies. The military understands aerospace power's submissive role to its political master but has established some very clear expectations for that relationship. Military leaders accept and even expect political involvement in the air campaign but are very specific as to when and where it would be most appropriate. The political tendencies of air campaigns in the age of limited war have been diametrically opposed to these anticipated levels. General officers expect one thing and the politicians do another. Clearly, something must be done to bridge this ever-widening gap. A closer look at the divergence between real politics and the ideal air campaign reveals some potential remedies to this chronic disconnect. The time has come for serious aerospace power advocates to begin to work with their civilian leaders to build a harmonious bond between military expectations and political tendencies.

Part 1

Introduction: “In Sickness and in Health”

It is clear, consequently, that war is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means.

— Carl von Clausewitz

The courtship between politics and airpower began in the skies over World War I and ran its bitter course throughout the Second World War. A comfortable Cold War engagement was cut short when politics took airpower as its reluctant bride on the eve of the age of limited war. It has been a troubled marriage ever since. Through the years, aerospace power advocates and their political masters have grown increasingly apart. The military's generals expect one thing and the politicians do another. In fact, the levels of political involvement during the campaign planning, conflict execution and war termination of two recent air campaigns, DESERT STORM and ALLIED FORCE, were quite divergent from the levels of policy commensurate with military expectations. While the politics of Operation ALLIED FORCE indicate some enduring political tendencies, though, levels of political involvement during the Gulf War reveal some promising potential remedies.

Part 2

Military Expectations: “The Prenuptial”

Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed: war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst.

— Carl von Clausewitz

While the military understands aerospace power’s submissive role to its political masters, it has established some very clear expectations for that relationship. The military accepts and even expects political involvement in the air campaign but is very specific as to when and where it would be most appropriate. Increased levels of political involvement, for example, are not only welcomed but also required during the incipient stages of campaign planning. Likewise, the military expects their civilian leaders to assume control of a military combat operation as it draws to a close. It is only during conflict execution where the military hopes to divorce itself from the dominance of policy. Simply stated, the military prosecutes wars; politicians start and finish them.

Campaign Planning

In accordance with these military expectations, campaign planning must begin with politics. According to Carl von Clausewitz, “no one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he

intends to conduct it.”¹ In fact, “a determination of national objectives is the first and most crucial step in the strategy process.”² An air campaign simply cannot be appropriately planned in the absence of clearly defined, militarily achievable political objectives. Such a campaign plan would amount to little more than a target list in search of an objective that aims solely to service random targets with available forces. “Just as it is difficult to score a bull’s-eye without a target, it is also difficult to devise a successful plan of action unless one knows the objective of that plan.”³ Clearly, then, in accordance with a military model, policy drives military planners during the initial stages of air campaign planning—not the other way around.

It is also fundamental to the military’s concept of campaign planning that the *civilian* leadership, as opposed to the *military* hierarchy, establishes the war’s political objectives. In so doing, the military’s political masters set the planning process in motion. At that point, though, the military expects political involvement to dissipate as the generals establish military objectives and their planning staffs devise a plan to achieve those objectives. Politicians brief the generals on the objectives; generals brief their civilian bosses on the plan. The political leadership then approves the plan, requiring modifications at the strategic level where appropriate. The military maintains control of operational issues such as force apportionment and tactical issues such as individual target selection. Political meddling into such aspects of the plan pulls a politician’s focus from the strategic level where it belongs to the operational and tactical level where it is, from the military perspective, both uninvited and inappropriate.

Conflict Execution

Following the same military thought, political involvement should continue to decrease during the campaign planning process until it reaches the lowest levels during conflict execution. Such a concept may appear to violate the most fundamental precepts of Clausewitzian thought.

On the contrary, many military theorists argue that the heightened levels of political guidance recognized by Clausewitz are aptly applied to the initial planning phases and the war's termination—not during actual hostilities. Clausewitz himself admits that “policy, of course, will not extend its influence to operational details.”⁴ To the military, the operational details of air campaign execution, such as individual targets and the weapons and tactics used to attack them, are inherently foreign to the influence of policy. General Douglas MacArthur, an icon of military pragmatism, would agree: “At that stage of the game when politics fail and the military takes over, you must trust the military . . . I do unquestionably state that when men become locked in battle, that there should be no artifice under the name of politics which should handicap your own men, decrease their chances for winning, and increase their losses.”⁵ The Chinese military philosopher, Sun Tzu, further validates and clarifies the military's expectation of minimal policy intervention during conflict execution by arguing that “he whose generals are able and not interfered with by the sovereign will be victorious.”⁶

For the air strategist, political constraints and restraints during air campaign execution will likely lead to what *Air Force Doctrine Document 1: Air Force Basic Doctrine* identifies as “the greatest vulnerability of air and space power employment: the misuse or misdirection of air and space power, which can reduce its contribution even more than enemy action.”⁷ The absence of such intervention allows aerospace power to use shock, surprise and simultaneity to realize its true potential. “It is the intention of most modern air and space operations to quickly attain objectives through swift, parallel, and decisive blows to the adversary's operational and strategic COGs [centers of gravity].”⁸ Likewise, *Joint Pub 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces and the United States* submits that the military “should strive to operate with overwhelming force.”⁹ Military strategists fear that policy interference at the tactical level of war will invariably

constrain and dilute the inherent potency of the air campaign. Political guidance during conflict execution, then, must remain solely at the strategic level, fully disentangled from operational and tactical issues such as target selection, weapons considerations and employment techniques. Consequently, only the lowest levels of political involvement—only at the highest levels of war—are commensurate with the military's view of conflict execution.

War Termination

In sharp contrast to the conflict execution phase, though, the military expects greatly increased political involvement as the war reaches a culminating point and nears completion. It is the politician and not the general who shapes the battlefield for the ensuing peace. "To translate the results on the battlefield into war termination requires political intervention. Armies do not end wars; states do."¹⁰ Generals win the nation's wars; politicians win the peace that follows. Consequently, the same generals who shun political intervention during execution expect significantly heightened levels of guidance as the war draws to a close. Joint military doctrine submits that "defeating an enemy military force is rarely sufficient to ensure a long-term solution to a crisis. Properly conceived conflict termination criteria are key to ensuring that military victories endure. To facilitate conception of effective termination criteria, US forces must be dominant in the final stages of an armed conflict."¹¹

In an ideal military model of war, political guidance of the war's ultimate termination actually begins at the very outset of campaign planning when policymakers set political objectives for the war based on a clear vision of the desired end state. "The desired end state should be clearly described by the NCA before Armed Forces of the United States are committed to an action."¹² The great military strategist, B. H. Liddell Hart, packed a pound of thought into an ounce of words when he submitted that the "object in war is a better state of peace."¹³ While

military objectives focus on the war at hand, political objectives should look to the peace that follows. "Strategy involves understanding the desired policy goals for a projected operation; that is, what should be the desired state of affairs when the conflict is terminated."¹⁴ In order to achieve a better state of peace, politicians must remain disentangled from the tactical level of the war's execution and free to seize the strategic opportunities to terminate the war in accordance with this desired end state.

Military Expectations Models

In summary, then, the military has clearly established a predictable flow for the levels of political involvement in the air campaign. The military professional expects high levels during the initial stages of campaign planning, steadily decreasing to the lowest levels of intervention

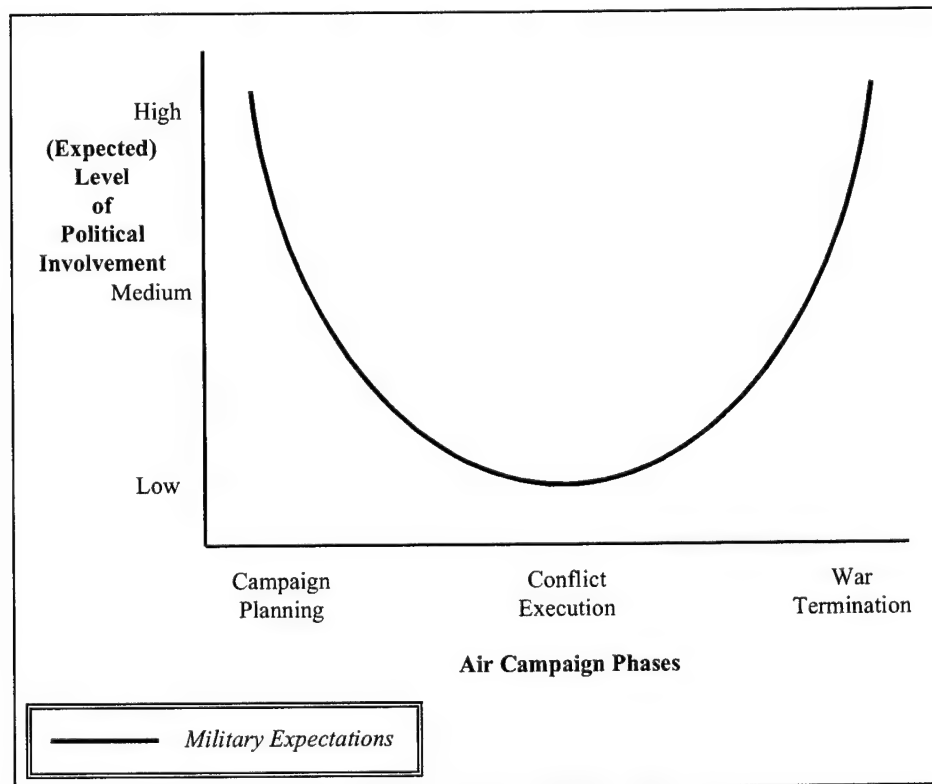


Figure 1. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Military Expectations)

during conflict execution and increasing once again as the war enters its termination phase (see Figure 1). Similarly, the military anticipates the highest levels of policy guidance at the strategic level of war and the least intervention at the tactical level (see Figure 2).

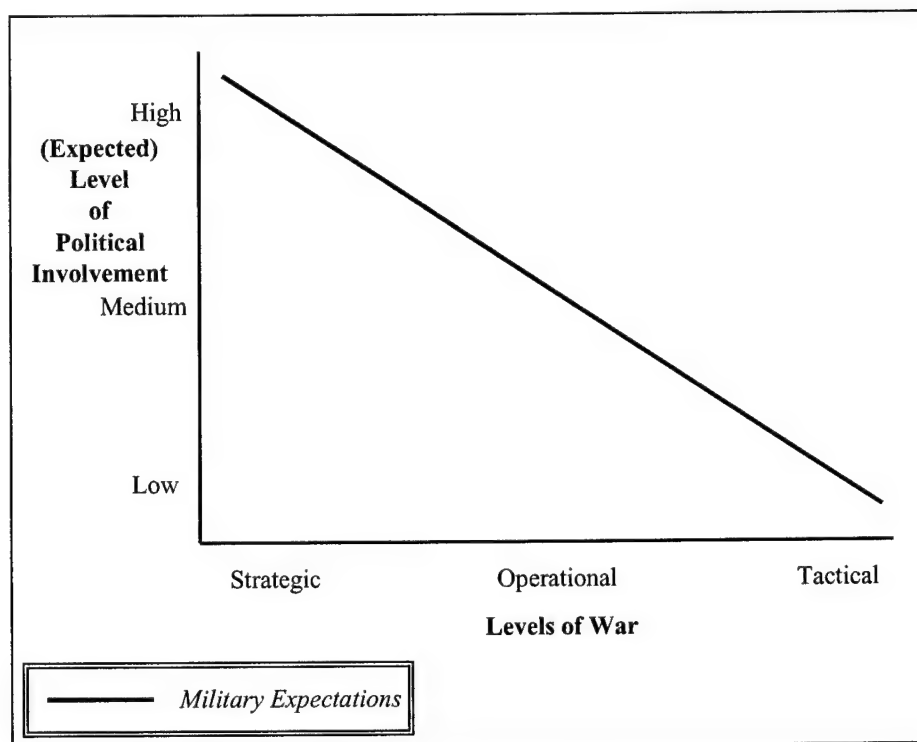


Figure 2. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Military Expectations)

Finally, the kingpin of the military expectations model is the vital link between political objectives and the desired end state they aim to achieve. "Campaign planning must be viewed as an integrated process beginning with strategic objectives and carrying the nation through an end state. The process should form a loop that constantly evaluates objectives and their intended results against desired economic, political, and military end states."¹⁵ Such a process requires the highest levels of political engagement early, during the establishment of political objectives, and later, when aligning the war's termination with the desired end state (see Figure 3).

Accordingly, retired Air Force Colonel John Warden submits that “the purpose of war ought to be to win the peace that follows and all planning and operations should be directly connected with the final objective.”¹⁶

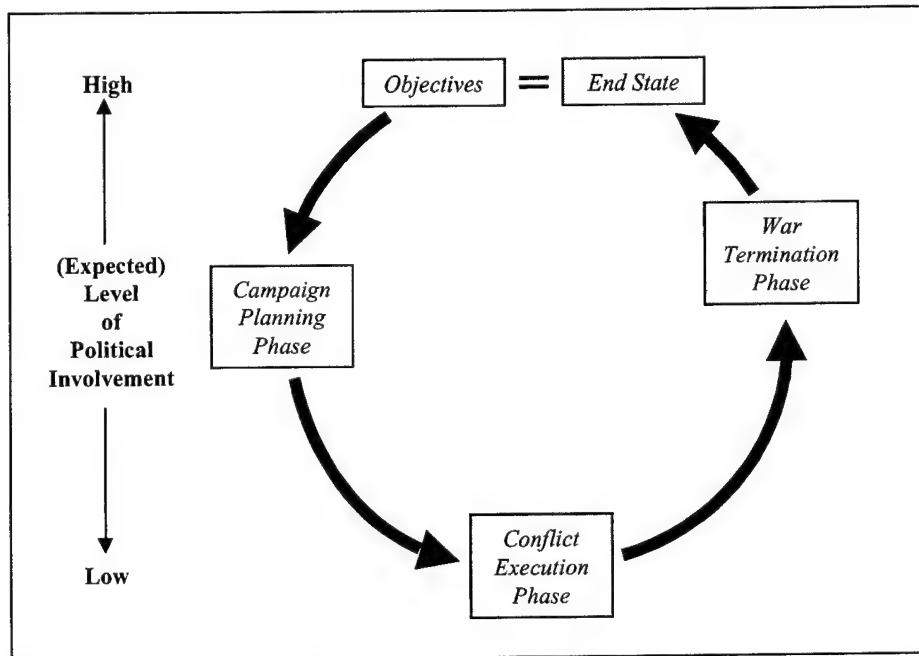


Figure 3. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Military Expectations)

Notes

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 579.

² Col Dennis M. Drew and Dr Donald M. Snow, *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, August 1988), 16.

³ Drew and Snow, 14.

⁴ Clausewitz, 606.

⁵ Clausewitz, 43.

⁶ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1963), 83.

⁷ Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1. *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997, 18.

⁸ AFDD 1, 25.

⁹ Joint Pub 1. *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 10 January 1995, III-2.

Notes

¹⁰ Leon V. Sigal, *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945* (London, U.K.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 13.

¹¹ Joint Pub 3-0. *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 1 February 1995, ix.

¹² Joint Pub 3-0, III-2.

¹³ B. H. Liddell Hart. *Strategy* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1967), 338.

¹⁴ Joint Pub 1, III-1.

¹⁵ Lt Col Larry A Weaver and Maj Robert D. Pollock, "Campaign Planning for the 21st Century: An Effect-Based Approach to the Planning Process," in *Air Command and Staff College Academic Year 2000 International Security and Military Studies Readings, Volume 2*, August 1999, 1.

¹⁶ Col John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign* (New York, N.Y.: toExcel, 1998), 144.

Part 3

The Politics of DESERT STORM: "A Match Made in Heaven?"

If the enemy is thrown off balance, he must not be given time to recover. Blow after blow must be aimed in the same direction: the victor, in other words, must strike with all his strength and not just against a fraction of the enemy's.

— Carl von Clausewitz

The vast majority of aerospace power advocates view DESERT STORM as a model air campaign. The prevailing opinion in Air Force circles is that the Gulf War hosted the optimum levels of political involvement commensurate with the military expectations outlined in the previous chapter. On the contrary, a closer look at campaign planning, conflict execution and war termination during DESERT STORM reveals that the actual levels of political involvement differed from the ideal military model in each of these three phases.

Campaign Planning

As previously discussed, military strategists expect their political masters to lay the proper foundation for the planning of a potential air campaign at the outset with clearly defined political objectives. Simply stated, military planning starts with political objectives. Unfortunately, such was not the case during the initial stages of air campaign planning for Operation DESERT STORM. While political leadership remained engaged throughout the planning process, the late injection of shortsighted political objectives would leave its mark when the Gulf War drew to a close months later.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, he clearly took US political and military leaders by surprise. Policymakers were initially quite stunned by Iraq's audacity and equally uncertain about a US response. Amidst the confusion, Colonel John Warden, then Air Force Deputy Director for war-fighting concepts, hurried home from a vacation cruise in the Caribbean and assembled a team of Checkmate planners to begin the process of building an air campaign to counter Iraqi aggression. It is important to note, however, that on the morning of 6 August 1990 when he initiated the process, Colonel Warden had no clearly defined political objectives. In fact, when the Checkmate team began planning for DESERT STORM, they had received no political direction at all.

To his credit, though, Colonel Warden followed the military's systematic planning process with a unique twist—he filled the void by scripting his own political and military objectives. “Instead of waiting an indeterminate time for politicians or DOD officials to give them a formal list of political objectives, these planners developed their own list from public statements of the president.”¹ In fact, Checkmate built the original campaign plan and had begun to brief the concept and its assumed objectives up the chain of command before President George Bush articulated the actual political objectives in a public address on 8 August 1990.²

From the outset, Colonel Warden conceived of an air campaign in stark contrast to the failed air strategy in Vietnam: “This is what we are going to call the plan; it's going to be Instant Thunder . . . This is not your Rolling Thunder. This is real war, and one of the things we want to emphasize right from the beginning is that this is not Vietnam! This is doing it right! This is using air power!”³ Ironically, though, in his haste to slay the dragon of Vietnam, he had unwittingly ushered in its most horrid legacy: military planning in the absence of political objectives. Fortunately, Checkmate's guess at the specific goals of their political masters proved

Instant Thunder's Assumed Political Objectives

1. Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.
2. Restore Kuwaiti sovereignty.
3. Secure free flow of oil.
4. Protect U.S. lives.

Instant Thunder's Assumed Military Objectives

1. Force Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.
2. Degrade Iraq's offensive capability.
3. Secure oil facilities.
4. Render Hussein ineffective as an Arab leader.

Official Political Objectives

1. Secure the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.
2. Restore the legitimate government of Kuwait.
3. Assure the security and stability of the Persian Gulf region.
4. Protect American lives.

Official Theater Military Objectives

1. Attack Iraqi political/military leadership and command and control.
2. Gain and maintain air superiority.
3. Sever Iraqi supply lines.
4. Destroy chemical, biological, and nuclear capability.
5. Destroy Republican Guard forces.
6. Liberate Kuwait City.

Figure 4. DESERT STORM Objectives⁴

to be remarkably close to the mark (see Figure 4). Not surprisingly, though, both the actual objectives and Colonel Warden's estimate of those aims were clearly focused on the short-term military task at hand at the expense of more long-term political considerations. Regrettably, the shortsighted nature of these objectives laid the foundation for a well-orchestrated combat operation that won a stunning military victory but has yet to win the peace that followed.

Conflict Execution

It is widely held that the execution of the Gulf War's air campaign was completely free of the type of political involvement that has been the hallmark of so many air operations before and

since DESERT STORM. For the most part, it is true that military generals ran the air war unencumbered by the constant supervision and interference of their political leaders. It is not true, however, that air strategists executed the DESERT STORM air campaign in the virtual absence of political involvement as prescribed by the military expectations model. In fact, three specific aspects of the air war, (1) the hunt for Iraqi Scuds, (2) the Al Firdos Bunker incident, and (3) the "Highway of Death," drew considerable attention and unwelcome guidance from the highest levels of the US government.

When Iraq launched the first Scud missiles at Israel on the second day of the air campaign, it became evident that these militarily insignificant missiles would likely prove to be Iraq's most potent political weapon. It was also clear that Israel would retaliate with military force and upset the fragile unity of the Gulf War coalition unless coalition aerospace power could counter the threat posed by Iraq's mobile Scud missiles.⁵ Such a scenario invited the passionate involvement of the military's top civilian leaders, such as Defense Secretary Richard Cheney: "I want some coverage out there . . . As long as I am secretary of defense, the Defense Department will do as I tell them. The number one priority is to keep Israel out of the war."⁶

It is interesting to note that US political leadership insisted upon a considerable diversion of assets away from a well-constructed air campaign and toward a difficult mission aerospace power proved poorly suited to achieve. While DESERT STORM's 43-day air war dedicated roughly 1,500 sorties to the Scud-hunting campaign, there is no definitive proof that coalition air forces destroyed a single mobile Scud launcher.⁷ "By the war's end, nearly every type of strike and reconnaissance aircraft employed in the war participated in the attempt to bring this threat under control, but with scant evidence of success."⁸ And yet Israel stayed out of the war.

Political intervention brought to the Gulf War what may have been a military failure and a political success.

While the civilian leadership remained deeply involved in the Scud hunt, they steered clear of the strategic air campaign itself until 13 February when F-117s targeted and destroyed an underground bunker in the Al Firdos district of Iraq's capital city of Baghdad. This valid military target was unfortunately also a hideout for 200-300 Iraqi civilians who were killed in the attack.⁹ "The resulting controversy over the deaths of several hundred civilians resulted in tightened control from Washington of attacks in downtown Baghdad."¹⁰ In fact, civilian policymakers placed Baghdad targets off-limits for several nights following the attack and reviewed all leadership targets for the remainder of the air war.¹¹ "After the Persian Gulf War, the Pentagon would tout the war as a validation of the post-Vietnam War principle that Washington should establish the broad parameters for the war and leave the details up to the theater commander. But now Washington was picking the targets."¹²

War Termination

The third and final aspect of the Gulf War air campaign that carried the burden of increased political involvement, the "Highway of Death," ultimately drove US policymakers to bring DESERT STORM to what may have been a premature end. The Gulf War neared its culmination as coalition air forces unleashed their fury on the Iraqi military attempting to escape Kuwait on the only highway leading back into Iraq. Press coverage of this "Highway of Death" fixated civilian leaders on the military's conflict execution at the tactical level of war. The time had come, however, for a strategic focus on the far-reaching political implications of war termination.

At this point, the shortsighted nature of the war's stated political aims came to the fore. The vital link the military has come to expect between the nation's political objectives and its desired end state was found lacking during the culmination of DESERT STORM. According to General Charles A. Horner, air component commander during the Gulf War, "one thing we really didn't do well in Desert Storm was termination of conflict. It was presumed by the military, when we were planning offensive operations . . . that somebody in the State Department was burning the midnight oil writing out the peace treaty."¹³ When General Colin L. Powell wrote years later that on 27 February 1991 he "thought that the people responsible ought to start thinking about how it would end," he made it clear that little thought had been given to war termination until it was seemingly upon them.¹⁴

When President Bush announced to the nation on the evening of 28 February 1991 that "Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met," he meant what he said.¹⁵ The military objectives had indeed been achieved. There were, however, a multitude of significant political issues that remained largely unresolved: the plight of the Shiite Muslims in Southern Iraq and the Kurds in Northern Iraq, the status of Iraq's Scuds and weapons of mass destruction, and the strength of Saddam Hussein and his Republican Guard. Policymakers had a clear vision of the desired end state in Kuwait. They had no such vision for Iraq. The fact that the United States terminated the "100-Hour War" as a politically-expedient measure to avoid bad press instead of a politically-sound effort to address the far-reaching political implications of an ill-conceived, premature cease-fire remains an unfortunate and continuing legacy of Operation DESERT STORM.

The Gulf War's most blatant deviation from the military expectations model, however, occurred when General Schwarzkopf met with Iraqi generals in the Iraqi town of Safwan to

negotiate a truce. Contrary to the expected high levels of political involvement, a *military general* negotiated a peace settlement and did so without a thread of guidance from his civilian bosses! Not surprisingly, General Schwarzkopf missed the opportunity to shape post-war Iraq with conditions his vanquished foes were, at that time, in no position to reject. "Washington would never again be in such a strong position to press its demands. Yet Schwarzkopf, and his civilian masters in Washington, let the moment pass."¹⁶ Nine years of on-going military operations in the Persian Gulf, including Provide Comfort, Southern Watch, Desert Thunder, Northern Watch, and Desert Fox, would ultimately fail to achieve through military means the end state in post-War Iraq that had been well within the political leadership's reach years before at Safwan.

Notes

¹ Col Edward C. Mann, *Thunder and Lightning: Desert Storm and the Airpower Debates* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1995), 87.

² Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 27.

³ Reynolds, 28-29.

⁴ Keaney and Cohen, 27, 39; Col Richard T. Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm: The Genesis of the Air Campaign against Iraq* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, January 1995), 29.

⁵ Colin L. Powell, *My American Journey* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, Inc., 1995), 511.

⁶ Michael R. Gordon and Gen Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War* (New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 234.

⁷ Gordon and Trainor, 247; Keaney and Cohen, 83.

⁸ Keaney and Cohen, 17.

⁹ Keaney and Cohen, 69.

¹⁰ Keaney and Cohen, 22.

¹¹ Keaney and Cohen, 69.

¹² Gordon and Trainor, 326.

¹³ Gen Charles A. Horner, "New Era Warfare," in *The War in the Air 1914-1994*, ed. Alan Stephens (Fairbairn, Australia: RAAF Air Power Studies Centre, March 1994), 324.

¹⁴ Powell, 519.

¹⁵ Powell, 523.

¹⁶ Gordon and Trainor, 448.

Part 4

The Politics of ALLIED FORCE: “The Honeymoon’s Over”

The terrible two-handed sword that should be used with the total strength to strike once and no more, becomes the lightest rapier—sometimes even a harmless foil fit only for thrusts and feints and parries.

— Carl von Clausewitz

And then there was ALLIED FORCE. The air war over Serbia was, for the politician, the epitome of armed conflict in the age of limited war. For the general, it was as bad as it could possibly get. Where military expectations called for political guidance, it was found lacking. When airmen hoped to operate free of intervention, they found a political restraint at every turn. If DESERT STORM uncovered some differences between military and political models for war, ALLIED FORCE revealed how widely divergent the two paths had truly become.

Campaign Planning

From the outset and throughout an entire year of planning, the ALLIED FORCE air campaign plan was plagued by political fixation on tactical targets at the expense of strategic objectives.¹ The ebb and flow of diplomatic initiatives, in fact, drove over 40 comprehensive changes in the plan from June 1998 to March 1999. “When US President William Clinton first announced the start of the bombing campaign . . . he was unwittingly voicing tactics, not strategy. He had things backwards . . . normal battle order goes policy, strategy and then tactics.

Had the Pentagon, when it had ample time, developed a coherent Kosovo strategy then many of its present problems could have been resolved before the first bomb was dropped.”²

In short, the planning came first and the objectives followed. The void left by the lack of political objectives was filled by a disjointed list of random targets—a list that changed with every diplomatic breakthrough and every political setback. The air campaign plan amounted to little more than a target list in search of an objective—a fragmented effort to service a short list of targets with the forces on hand. “When the President of the U. S. threatened to use force to coerce Serbia into accepting a negotiated settlement for the Kosovo crisis, he should have been prepared for that contingency. Presidents should plan for war before they threaten war.”³

Using the military-expectations model as a template, then, the ALLIED FORCE methodology was clearly no way to plan an air campaign. Objectives should initiate the planning process. In ALLIED FORCE, though, words resembling political objectives were not forthcoming until 24 March 1999, the same day the air war began. Clearly defined, well-articulated objectives with any semblance of an end-state vision did not surface until days into the air campaign (see Figure 5). “One of the main problems with NATO’s overall approach was that it was neither counting on going to war nor planning on going to war.”⁴

Ultimately, the politicians called for an air campaign plan that would hit a handful of politically correct targets for a few days and hope for the best. Representative Tom Delay, House Majority Whip, summarized the political contribution to the military planning process in an acrid statement in Congress on 28 April 1999.

The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told us that this was no big deal, that we were going to bomb for a couple of days, 48 hours, and then stop bombing, and Milosevic would come to the table. When asked the question, ‘What if he does not come to the table?’ they said, ‘Well, we will go to Phase II, and Phase II is that we will bomb him for a few more days. Then he will be going to the table, by crackie.’ And then we

asked, 'Then what?' Then they said, 'Well, we will bomb for another week and that will force him to come to the table and this will be all over with.' And then we asked, 'Then what?' There was silence.⁵

Political Objectives

President Bill Clinton on 24 March 1999:

- Demonstrate NATO's opposition to aggression.
- Deter Milosevic from further attacks.
- Damage Serbian capacity to wage war.

NATO Secretary General Solana on 1 April 1999:

- Stop the killing in Kosovo.
- End the refugee crisis; make it possible for them to return.
- Create conditions for political solutions based on Rambouillet Accord.

US Military Objectives

William Cohen, US Secretary of Defense, on 24 March 1999:

- Deter further action against Kosovars.
- Diminish Serbian Army's ability to attack.

General Henry Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 24 March 1999:

- Reduce ability of Serbian forces to attack the Kosovars.

Secretary Cohen and General Shelton on 24 March 1999:

- Deter further action against Kosovars.
- Reduce ability of Serbian forces to attack the Kosovars.
- Attack Serbian air defenses with minimal collateral damage and civilian casualties.
- Failing to deter Milosevic in the near term, diminish his ability to wage war in the future.

Figure 5. ALLIED FORCE Objectives⁶

Conflict Execution

This unfortunate lack of clearly defined, militarily achievable objectives became evident when the alliance began to execute the ALLIED FORCE air campaign plan. While every strategic target in the DESERT STORM air campaign fit together like pieces of a puzzle, there was no glue to hold the ALLIED FORCE campaign together. Efforts by the military to build a

coherent targeting strategy were derailed countless times when politically sensitive targets were withheld by politicians within the alliance. Airmen had hoped for Instant Thunder; they got Rolling Thunder instead. Tactics became the only strategy as generals and their civilian leaders fixated on individual targets and the specific weapons and employment techniques used to attack them.

Inconsistencies in the political objectives also made it difficult for ALLIED FORCE generals to establish focused military objectives to achieve them. A great debate between General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, and Lieutenant General Mike Short, his air component commander, underscored the incongruent nature of ALLIED FORCE execution. While General Clark focused on fielded Serb forces in Kosovo, General Short viewed strategic targets in Serbia as the key to achieving the war's political objectives. "This is the jewel in the crown," Short said. "To me, the jewel in the crown is when those B-52s rumble across Kosovo," replied Clark. "You and I have known for weeks that we have different jewelers," said Short. "My jeweler outranks yours," said Clark."⁷ As Serb military and paramilitary forces stepped up the forced expulsion of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, the jeweler's rank and the political pressure from above would win the day. Similar to the inefficient Scud hunting campaign during the Gulf War, alliance air crews experienced great difficulty finding Serb military forces and their equipment amid the weather, the terrain and the chaos in Kosovo. While strategic bombing of Serbian targets offered a militarily sound approach to victory, the fielded forces campaign in Kosovo nonetheless prevailed as the political expedient of the day.

Perhaps the most prevalent aspect of the air war's execution, however, was the stark contrast between how the military hoped to run the campaign and what their political masters actually

approved. "As an airman, I'd have done this a whole lot differently than I was allowed to do. We could have done this differently. We should have done this differently."⁸ General Short's testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee following the air war further drives home the point.

I would have gone for the head of the snake on the first night. I'd have turned the lights out the first night. I'd have dropped the bridges across the Danube. I'd [have] hit five or six political and military headquarters in downtown Belgrade. [Yugoslav President Slobodan] Milosevic and his cronies would have waked up the first morning asking what the hell was going on.⁹

Civilian leaders would not permit any such attacks until much later in the air campaign and even then only released such targets in a piecemeal fashion. The military model envisions a carefully integrated, swift, overwhelming and decisive initial blow. The politics of ALLIED FORCE would only allow the gradual escalation of such violence, thereby approving only segmented, incremental targeting of sensitive strategic sites. "Allied Force was never designed to apply force decisively. It was, rather, a calibrated use of force . . . Allied Force in no way resembled what current Air Force doctrine preaches. In fact, it was, in many ways, the antithesis of Air Force doctrine."¹⁰

Like DESERT STORM's Al Firdos bunker incident, each accidental bombing during ALLIED FORCE tightened the noose of political restraints. The highly publicized, unintentional bombing of the Chinese Embassy left downtown Belgrade off-limits to subsequent allied attacks. A cluster bomb that opened early over an urban area in Serbia led politicians to forbid any further use of like munitions. The F-15E attack on a rail bridge that destroyed a Serb passenger train led to detailed political restraints on specific employment tactics. Additional restrictions on weapons delivery techniques and procedures came with the bombing of an ethnic Albanian vehicle convoy, a terribly unfortunate, but predictable side-effect of the fielded forces targeting campaign in Kosovo. Politicians, hopelessly embroiled at the tactical level, proved woefully ill

prepared to proactively confront the strategic implications of this inevitable collateral damage and the consequential civilian casualties.

War Termination

The most unfortunate aspect of the politicians' tactical focus during ALLIED FORCE execution was their neglect of the strategic eventualities of war termination. They may have missed the forest for the trees. The civilian leadership's shortsighted focus could see only as far as today's Kosovo and consequently left tomorrow's Yugoslavia, and the Balkans as a whole, largely unresolved. In 1995, Deliberate Force led to a brokered peace in Bosnia but left the rest of Yugoslavia for another day. In 1999, ALLIED FORCE stopped the bloodshed in Kosovo and the flow of refugees from Kosovo, but it failed to bring the underlying causes of conflict in that Serb province any closer to a lasting resolution. Campaign planning lacked objectives. The objectives, when they finally came, lacked a clear vision for a long-term end state in Kosovo and for a better state of peace in the Balkans as a whole.

On 10 June 1999, Milosevic agreed to the terms set forth by the alliance. But "it was a deal, not a defeat. The Serbian army was allowed to leave with all of its equipment; Yugoslav sovereignty over Kosovo was enshrined in the agreement; and an indicted war criminal was allowed to remain in power."¹¹ And what about Serb's paramilitary thugs who had carried out the ethnic cleansing in both Bosnia and Kosovo? What about the future of Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? What about Montenegro? Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of Defense in the Reagan Administration, submits that it "was not the kind of victory we should have had . . . you had a number of failures which in effect tarnished to a very considerable extent and reduced the value of the enormous contribution made by the Air Force and all of the people connected with it."¹² In their efforts to win today's military battle, the

politicians may have lost tomorrow's political war. So busy at the tactical level trying desperately to win the air war over Serbia, they sorely missed the strategic opportunity to win the peace that would follow.

Notes

¹ James A. Kitfield, "Another Look at the Air War That Was," *Air Force Magazine*, October 1999, 39.

² Barnes, Frederick, "Washington Looks at Kosovo's Lessons," *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, vol. 27, no. 7 (1999): 13.

³ Senator John McCain, "Now That We're In, We Have to Win," *Time*, 12 April 1999, 56.

⁴ Stephen P. Aubin, "Operation Allied Force: War or 'Coercive Diplomacy'?", *Strategic Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 5.

⁵ "Verbatim Special: The Balkan War," *Air Force Magazine*, June 1999, 51.

⁶ "Response to 'The Air War Over Serbia' Initial Report," in *Air Command and Staff College Academic Year 2000 Aerospace Operations Coursebook*, February 2000, 607.

⁷ Dana Priest, "Tension Grew with Divide over Strategy," *Washington Post*, 21 September 1999, 1.

⁸ "Verbatim Special: The Balkan War," *Air Force Magazine*, July 1999, 43.

⁹ Robert S. Dudley, "Verbatim," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 58.

¹⁰ Aubin, 7-8.

¹¹ Aubin, 8.

¹² John T. Correll, "The Use of Force," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 38.

Part 5

Political Tendencies: “A Marriage of Convenience”

In short, at the highest level the art of war turns into policy—but a policy conducted by fighting battles rather than by sending diplomatic notes.

— Carl von Clausewitz

Neither DESERT STORM nor ALLIED FORCE followed the pattern of political involvement prescribed by military expectations. While DESERT STORM saw some differences, though, ALLIED FORCE displayed extreme deviations in every phase of the air campaign. A closer look from the political perspective suggests that DESERT STORM may be the exception and ALLIED FORCE—the rule. The preponderance of US air campaigns in the past has featured the same political tendencies displayed during the air war over Serbia. It may be that this ALLIED FORCE model epitomizes the likely trend of political involvement in future air wars as well.

Political Involvement during the Air Campaign

The political tendencies of air campaigns in the age of limited war have been diametrically opposed to the levels of political involvement commensurate with military expectations. As evidenced by the Kosovo crisis, politicians, fixated on various diplomatic efforts to avert war, tend to provide the military negligible levels of guidance during the initial stages of air campaign

planning. Once air strategists have designed their air campaign in the virtual absence of clearly defined political objectives, their civilian leaders begin to show more interest in the planning

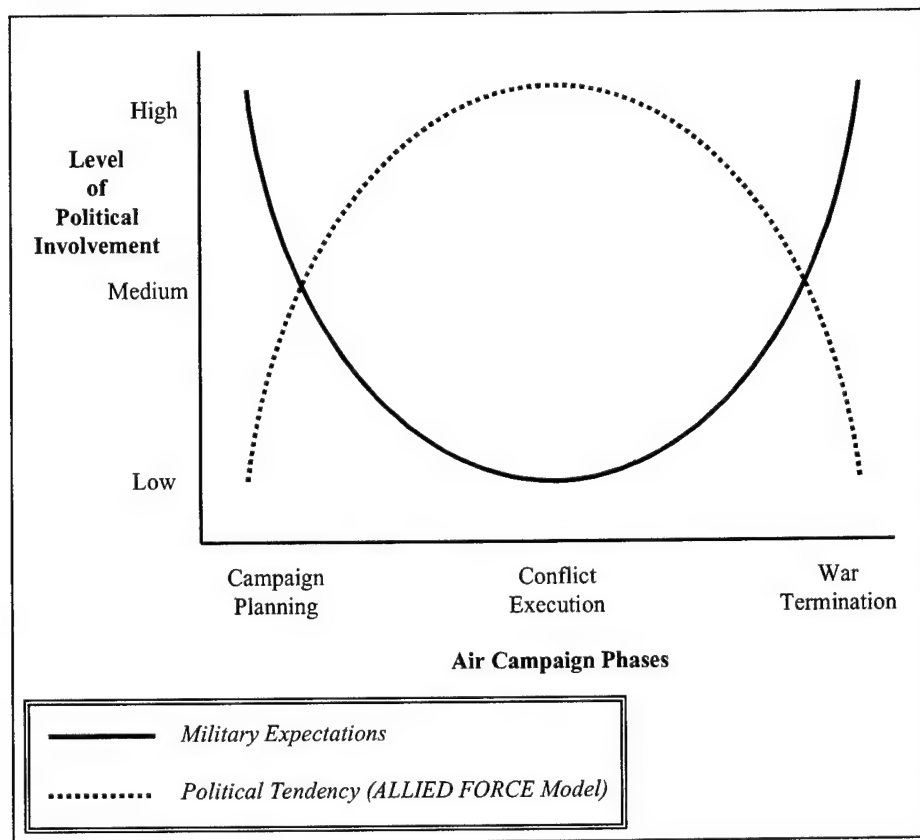


Figure 6. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Political Tendency)¹

process as failed diplomatic initiatives signal the increased likelihood of war. The period just prior to the initiation of hostilities hosts a flurry of activity as politicians inject belated objectives and airmen build new plans. This heightened level of political intervention remains during conflict execution but drops off drastically as the air campaign approaches completion. Generals, who at this point need coherent guidance on war termination, find their civilian leaders wholly disengaged in the military's effort to shape the battlefield in accordance with political direction (see Figure 6).

Objectives-to-End-State Loop

Such a pattern of political involvement results in last-minute, ill-conceived, politically expedient objectives focused more on the war at hand than the peace that will follow. At the outset of the Kosovo crisis, for example, politicians were more concerned with averting war than constructing forward-looking political objectives for that war based on a clear vision of the desired end state. Likewise, civilian leaders tend to conduct wars with little interest in the end state and often terminate them in the absence of serious consideration for the better state of peace (see Figure 7). A pattern of politics that fails to link the political objectives with the desired end state will at best achieve a short-lived military victory incapable of withstanding the political hardships that will likely follow.

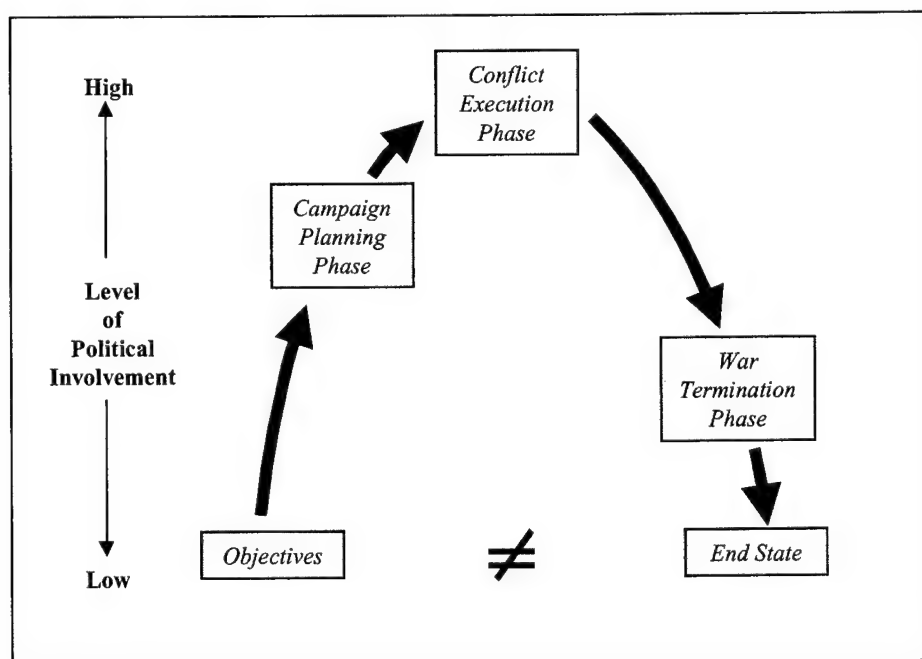


Figure 7. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Political Tendency)

Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War

The genesis of this disconnect is most often attributable to a political tendency prevalent in Operation ALLIED FORCE. Policymakers are often much more involved at the tactical level of war than the military has grown to expect and relatively less involved at the strategic level. Politicians tend to fixate on the tactical considerations of the moment at the expense of the war's far-reaching strategic implications (see Figure 8). Consequently, they often miss the forest for the trees and the peace for the war. "Exhausted, harassed, besieged men found it necessary to

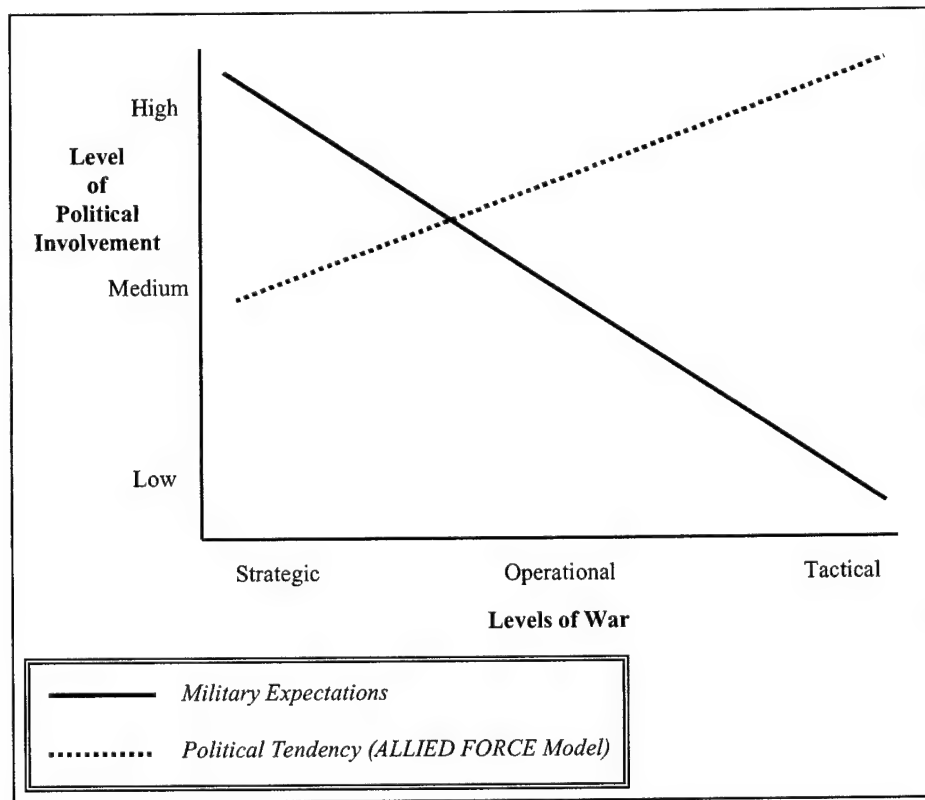


Figure 8. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Political Tendency)

concentrate on tactics rather than strategy, on micro-problems rather than macro-solutions, on today's crises rather than tomorrow's opportunities."² This dreary picture of US policy during

Vietnam is equally applicable to ALLIED FORCE and regrettably reveals an increasingly common political tendency in the age of limited war. "Who is left to guide the nation through the war and to keep the costs of fighting in line with the long-term benefits, if the top leader uses his precious time to . . . decide whether or not to bomb that power plant?"³

Gradual Escalation

The enduring legacy of Operation ALLIED FORCE will almost certainly be an undeniable political tendency toward gradual escalation. What failed in Vietnam seems to the politician to have been a success in the war with Yugoslavia. While the Weinberger Doctrine aimed to purge US military strategy of the concept of incrementalism, it may have done little more than postpone the inevitable (see Figure 9). The Weinberger Doctrine's rigid guidelines may have driven the politics of DESERT STORM, but ALLIED FORCE policy clearly sidestepped it altogether in favor of the venerable concept of coercive diplomacy with a unique twist. "Rather than delivering decisive blows through parallel warfare, the politically constrained military leaders carried out an operation that might best be described as 'escalation theory meets high-tech attrition warfare.' It had all the marks of the Clinton administration's reliance on the notion of 'diplomacy backed by force.'"⁴ The blatant divergence from military expectations that characterized ALLIED FORCE, then, may represent the most predictable political tendency for aerospace warfare in the 21st Century.

Airmen will, no doubt, continue to maintain that a rapid and massive application of air force will be more efficient and effective than gradual escalation. They are probably correct. Yet when the political and tactical constraints imposed on air leaders are extensive and pervasive—and that trend seems more rather than less likely—then gradual escalation will be more appealing . . . A measured and steadily increasing use of airpower against an enemy, which gives him ample opportunity to assess his situation and come to terms, combined with a remarkably low casualty rate for both ourselves and the enemy's civilian populace, may be the future of war.⁵

In a speech delivered on 28 November 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger delineated his guidelines for the use of military force which came to be known as "The Weinberger Doctrine:"

1. "First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did in Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.
2. "Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all . . ."
3. "Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that . . ."
4. "Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements . . ."
5. "Fifth, before the US commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress . . . We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas, or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.
6. "Finally, the commitment of US forces to combat should be a last resort."

Figure 9. The Weinberger Doctrine⁶

Notes

¹ Figure 6 is similar in appearance to a graph Maj Vicki J. Rast presented in an Air Command and Staff College lecture, "War Termination & Conflict Settlement: An Introduction to Concepts & Considerations," at Maxwell AFB, Alabama on 1 November 1999. The graphs both deal with levels of political involvement during stages of armed conflict. The concepts presented in the figures, however, are quite different. The pictures are similar but the ideas are not.

² Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1989), 124.

³ Fred C. Ikle, *Every War Must End* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1991), 19.

⁴ Stephen P. Aubin, "Operation Allied Force: War or 'Coercive Diplomacy'?", *Strategic Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 4.

⁵ Col Phillip S. Meilinger, "Gradual Escalation," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1999, 18.

Notes

⁶ John T. Correll, "The Use of Force," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 38.

Part 6

Potential Remedies: “To Love, Honor, and Obey”

The political objective is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.

— Carl von Clausewitz

Clearly, then, the tendencies of political involvement across the phases of the air campaign lie in sharp contrast to the military's expectations. Something must be done to bridge this ever-widening gap. A closer look at the divergence between real politics and the ideal air campaign reveals some possible middle ground between the two. There may in fact be no fewer than seven potential remedies to the chronic disconnect between political and military views of the air campaign.

Political Involvement during the Air Campaign

The first of these potential remedies explores the neutral ground between traditional military expectations and contemporary political tendencies. Just as ALLIED FORCE revealed likely political tendencies, the DESERT STORM model illuminates one possible remedy. However, it is not the misconceived, idealized DESERT STORM of military folklore but instead the real Gulf War that featured *unclearly* defined political objectives, uninvited political involvement during execution, and shortcomings during war termination that sheds light on this neutral ground.

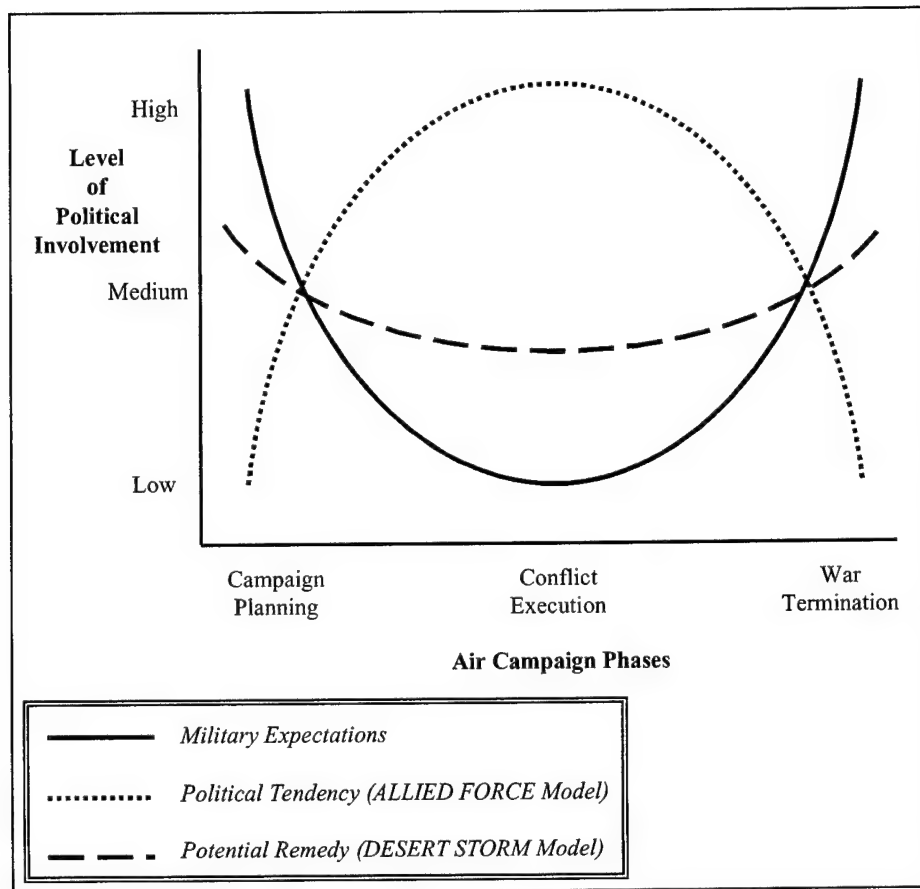


Figure 10. Political Involvement during the Air Campaign (Potential Remedy)

This DESERT STORM remedy notably features less political guidance than the military has grown to expect during the initial stages of campaign planning but more than their civilian leaders are accustomed to providing (see Figure 10). Following this model, the politicians would be less involved during conflict execution than they were in ALLIED FORCE but more involved than the military expects them to be. Finally, as the air campaign approaches the critical termination phase, policy will have more of an impact on the war's end than it normally tends to but less than a purely military model would suggest. The implication is that airmen must be poised to fill in the gap left during planning and termination and prepared to execute operations with increased levels of political supervision.

Objectives-to-End-State Loop

The second potential remedy underlines the vitally important link between the initial political objectives and the desired end state. The difference between this model and the military's expectation lies in the various levels of political involvement during this cyclical process (see Figure 11). Once again, there is less policy guidance than the military expects at the beginning and the end of the air campaign and more during execution. The connection between the policy objectives and the desired end state, however, remains very much intact. Regrettably, there was no such link in either ALLIED FORCE or DESERT STORM.

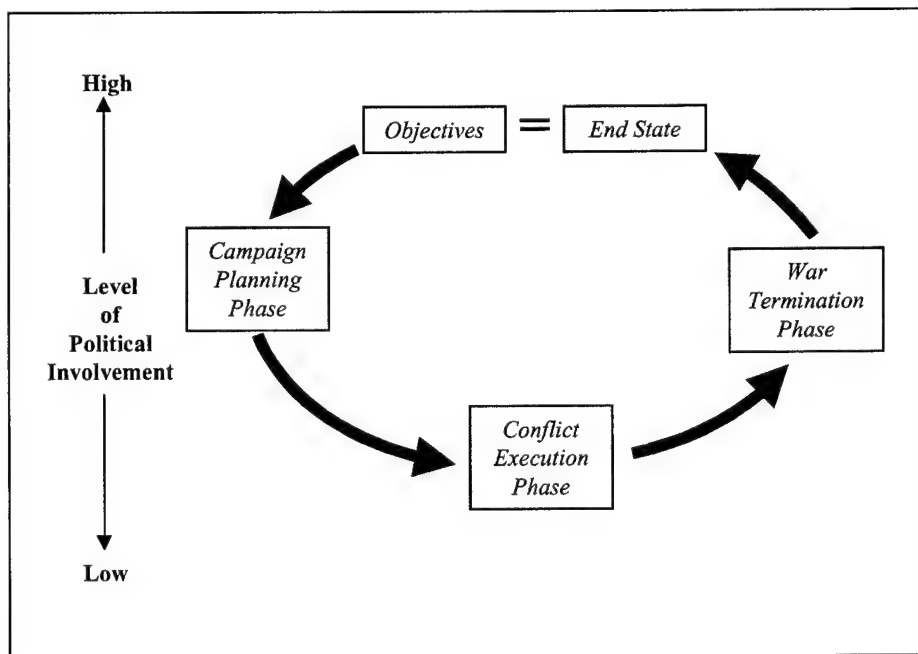


Figure 11. Air Campaign Objectives-to-End-State Loop (Potential Remedy)

According to this model, the burden lies both with military *and* political leaders to ensure the objectives flow steadily through the execution phase on course to termination in a way that achieves the desired end state. According to joint military doctrine, the military's role in this process begins *during planning*: "In order to clearly describe the desired end state, planners

should consider what may be necessary to end the armed conflict and the periods of postconflict activities likely to follow. Commanders at all levels should have a common understanding of the conditions that define success before initiation of the operation.”¹ Air Force doctrine commits the military to end state consideration *during conflict execution* as well by submitting that “the way a conflict is conducted may have a great effect on the actual end state achieved.”² Finally, Clausewitz aptly requires military leadership *during war termination*: “To bring a war, or one of its campaigns, to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce: the commander-in-chief is simultaneously a statesmen.”³

Political Involvement across the Air Campaign’s Levels of War

The third potential remedy aims to strike a balance between the military and political views of political involvement across the levels of war. Like the first remedy, this model draws its roots from the pattern of involvement during the Gulf War. Accordingly, the military will find less policy at the strategic level and more at the tactical level than they have come to expect. The civilian leadership, on the other hand, would become generally less involved with tactics and more concerned with strategy.

Air Force doctrine boasts the capability to conduct parallel operations simultaneously across the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war. Air strategists seem utterly shocked, however, when they confront their political masters as they traverse these levels. The traditional military view of war sees politicians at the strategic level, military at the operational and tactical level and very little contact in between. A more realistic perspective, though, recognizes that both politics and aerospace power span the levels of war. Consequently, aerospace power will often confront policy (and frustration) at each of these levels (see Figure 12). What is

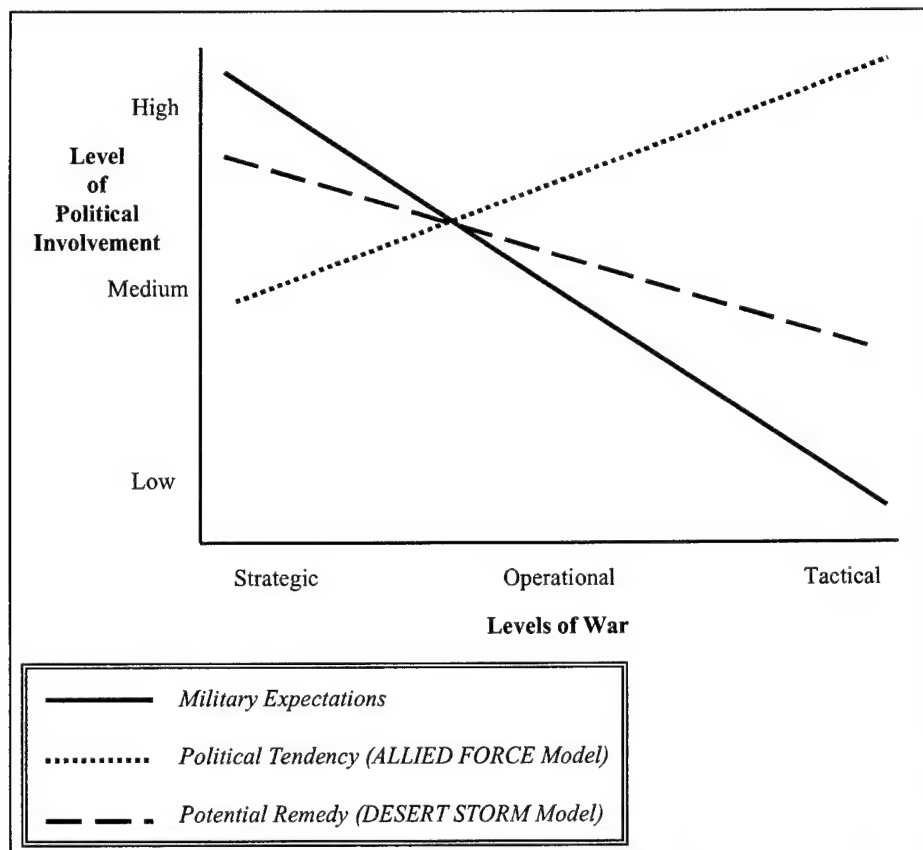


Figure 12. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Potential Remedy)

paramount, though, is that the politician intervenes in a knowledgeable manner and that his policy is congruent with the desired effect.

[W]hen people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence. If the policy is right—that is, successful—any intentional effect it has on the conduct of the war can only be to the good. If it has the opposite effect the policy itself is wrong. Only if statesmen look to certain military moves and actions to produce effects that are foreign to their nature do political decisions influence operations for the worse. In the same way as a man who has not fully mastered a foreign language sometimes fails to express himself correctly, so statesmen often issue orders that defeat the purpose they are meant to serve. Time and again that has happened, which demonstrates that a certain grasp of military affairs is vital for those in charge of general policy.⁴

Effects-Based Targeting

The fourth potential remedy integrates the concept of effects-based targeting into the model discussed in the previous section. Accordingly, effects-based targeting should allow politicians

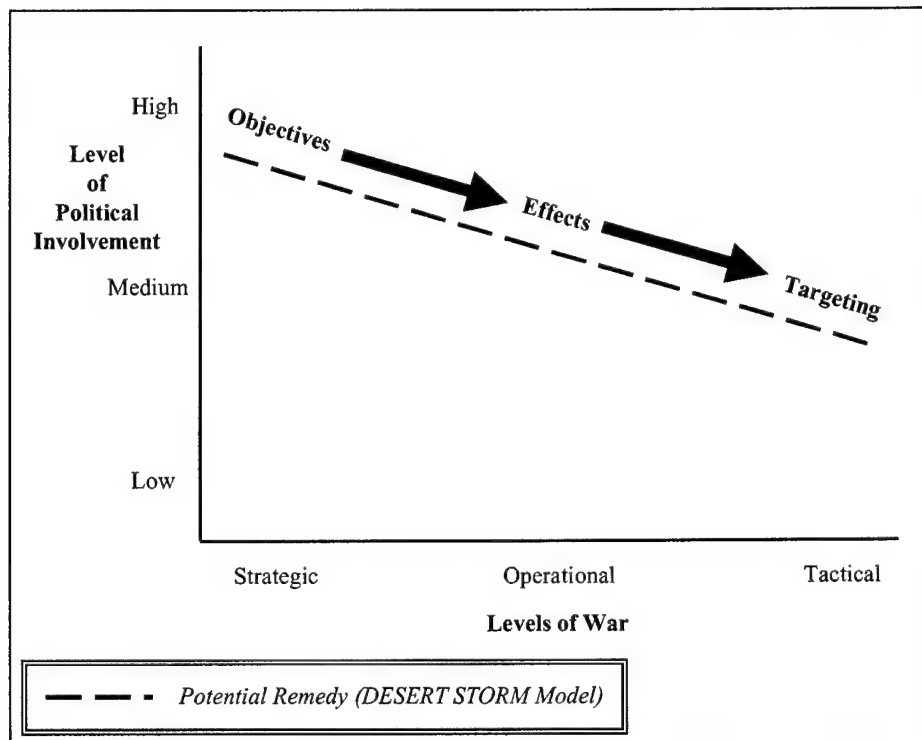


Figure 13. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Levels of War (Effects-Based Targeting)

to focus primarily on objectives at the strategic level of war while the generals and their staffs analyze effects at the operational level. In this approach, the selection of individual targets to achieve the general's effects and the politician's objectives remain firmly rooted at the tactical level (see Figure 13). Former Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael J. Dugan likes the idea: "Targeting is a terrific concept for the captain and for the sergeant. In my mind it is not a useful concept for the colonel and the general. They need to be thinking about what is the outcome of having targeted and destroyed or degraded or otherwise disposed of this spot on the ground

where somebody puts the crosshairs. Somehow we ought to be talking about the objectives of this when we get in public and are trying to explain ourselves.”⁵ It is important to note that, while political involvement in this model decreases across the levels of war, politics will still have appreciable influence on targeting, weaponeering and tactics. The goal with this concept, however, is to focus the bulk of policy at the strategic level, allowing the politician’s objectives to drive the effects and lead to individual targets in a coherent fashion. According to General John P. Jumper, Commander of US Air Forces in Europe during ALLIED FORCE, effects-based targeting “has to be the objective of the air campaign planners, as opposed to campaign by target-list management, which means that you take a list of approved targets, and you sort of manage them on a day-to-day basis . . . We have to find a way to get the political consensus behind the effect, rather than focused on the target.”⁶

Political Involvement across the Air Campaign’s Spectrum of Conflict

The fifth potential remedy suggests that the level of political involvement may be predicated by the intensity of the conflict. In line with this concept, an air war of relatively low intensity will see higher levels of political involvement during execution while a high-intensity conflict will host much lower levels of policy influence. Although quite simple on the surface, such an idea might explain the increased political intervention during ALLIED FORCE execution relative to DESERT STORM (see Figure 14). Additionally, it suggests the military must be prepared to confront differing levels of influence dependent upon where the air campaign falls along the spectrum of conflict.

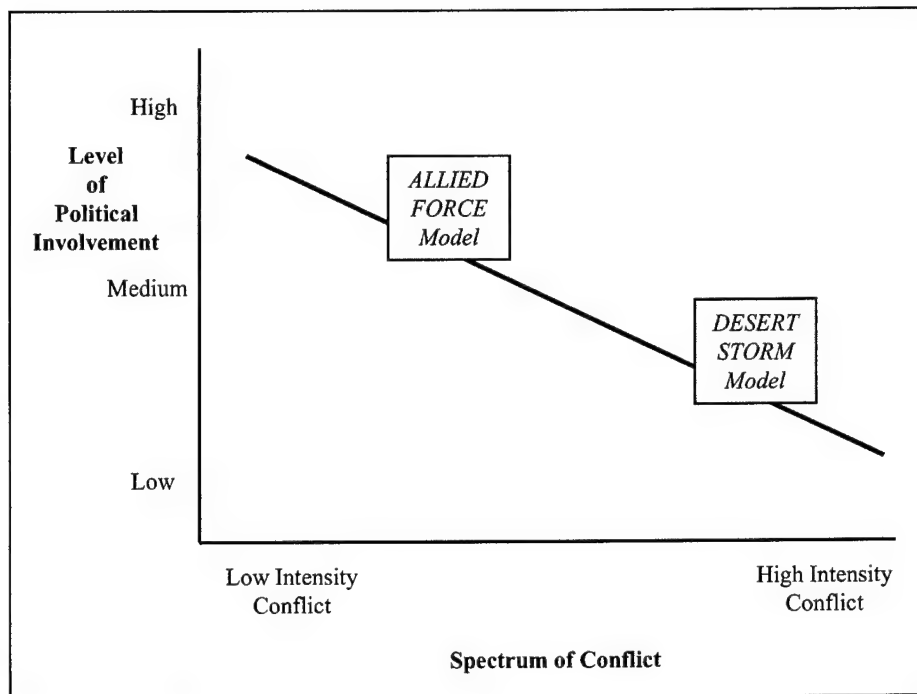


Figure 14. Political Involvement across the Air Campaign's Spectrum of Conflict

An Airman's Advice

The sixth potential remedy mandates the placement of airmen into positions of authority where they can influence the politics of future air campaigns. "At a time when aerospace power has become the force of choice . . . it is imperative that both at the level of the national command authority and the top levels of military commands there be a senior airman in position to give advice on aerospace capabilities and employment options."⁷ The divergence between an airman's and a politician's way of war underscores the vital importance of airmen who understand aerospace power doctrine and can clearly articulate its sophisticated precepts to their political masters. Simply stated, a well-placed, convincing argument may dissuade the future misuse of aerospace power. "How often have officers dumbly acquiesced in ill-advised operations simply for lack of the mental power and verbal apparatus to convince an impatient

minister where the errors of his plan lay?"⁸ The enduring words of General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, so important in his own time, may be even more applicable in the post Cold-War era than they were in 1953 when he delivered them at an Air War College graduation: "When you leave here, you should understand air power, and you *must* preach the doctrine. You will be on staffs where you are *going to have to educate*. . . . You have got to go out and preach the doctrine of air power and never give an inch on it."⁹

Toward an Aerospace Doctrine for Limited War

And yet, the seventh and final potential remedy asks today's aerospace power advocates to reconsider such a dogmatic approach to yesterday's airpower doctrine. Aerospace doctrine as currently written is an anachronistic, total-war concept irrefutably at odds with the political realities of limited war in the modern, post-Cold War era. It prepares airmen quite well to fight their political masters over the right way to prosecute an air war but leaves them empty-handed when forced to fight an adversary in a politically-restrained environment. Air Force General Joe Ralston, who replaced General Clark as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, reveals how incompatible current aerospace doctrine is with the likely future policy of gradual escalation:

US airmen will no doubt continue to maintain that a rapid and massive application of airpower will be more efficient and effective than gradual escalation. I share this belief. Yet, when the political and tactical constraints imposed on air leaders are extensive and pervasive—and that trend seems more, rather than less, likely—then gradualism may be perceived as the only option, and whether or not we like it, a measured and steadily increasing use of airpower against an opponent may be one of the options for future war.¹⁰

Practically speaking, current aerospace doctrine provides the nation with one and only one way to prosecute an air campaign: the parallel application of overwhelming force to deliver a swift, decisive blow. Any variation amounts to little more than a reluctant, makeshift adjustment on the fly. The time has come for aerospace power advocates to begin seriously exploring other

more contemporary and politically palatable aerospace power strategies. The Air Force has a doctrine for a high-intensity, major theater war such as DESERT STORM. It has nothing for a less intense, politically restrained, incremental air war like Operation ALLIED FORCE. According to General Jumper, aerospace power is ripe for such a strategy:

From the air campaign planning point of view, it is always the neatest and tidiest when you can get a political consensus of the objective of a certain phase, and then go about [achieving] that objective with [the] freedom to act as you see militarily best . . . [But that] is not the situation we find ourselves in. We can rail against that, but it does no good. It is the politics of the moment that is going to dictate what we are able to do . . . If the limit of that consensus means gradualism then we are going to have to find a way to deal with a phased-air campaign with gradual escalation . . . We hope to be able to convince [civilian politicians] that is not the best way to do it, but in some cases we are going to have to live with that situation.¹¹

Notes

¹ Joint Pub 3-0. *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 1 February 1995, III-2.

² Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998, 9.

³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 111.

⁴ Clausewitz, 608.

⁵ James A. Kitfield, "Another Look at the Air War That Was," *Air Force Magazine*, October 1999, 42.

⁶ Kitfield, 42.

⁷ Stephen P. Aubin, "Operation Allied Force: War or 'Coercive Diplomacy'?", *Strategic Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 11.

⁸ William R. Hawkins, "The Man Who Invented Limited War," *The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, vol. 4, no. 1, Autumn 1991.

⁹ Phillip S. Meilinger, *Hoyt S. Vandenberg: The Life of a General* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989), 206. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ John T. Correll, "The Use of Force," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 39.

¹¹ Kitfield, 41.

Part 7

Conclusion: “‘Til Death do us Part”

Do political relations between peoples and between their governments stop when diplomatic notes are no longer exchanged? Is war not just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar, indeed, may be its own, but not its logic.

— Carl von Clausewitz

Politics will remain part and parcel of the air campaign. Airmen will encounter their political masters at every juncture, from campaign planning to conflict execution and war termination. “Policy, then, will permeate all military operations, and, in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuous influence on them.”¹ For decades, airpower zealots have fought in vain to rid themselves of uninvited political intervention. The time has come for serious aerospace power advocates to instead begin to work with their civilian leaders to build a harmonious bond between military expectations and political tendencies. The cacophony of ALLIED FORCE should focus generals and politicians alike on the merits of the DESERT STORM model. Simply stated, divorce is not an option. By working to mend their troubled marriage, though, politics and aerospace power can spend the golden years of the 21st Century building a happier home where they can grow old together.

Notes

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

Bibliography

- Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1. *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, September 1997.
- Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2. *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998.
- Aubin, Stephen P. "Operation Allied Force: War or 'Coercive Diplomacy'?" *Strategic Review*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 4-12.
- Barnes, Frederick. "Washington Looks at Kosovo's Lessons." *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, vol. 27, no. 7 (1999): 13-14.
- Clodfelter, Mark. *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam*. New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1989.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Correll, John T. "The Use of Force." *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 37-39.
- Drew, Col Dennis M., and Dr Donald M. Snow. *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems*. Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, August 1988.
- Dudney, Robert S. "Verbatim." *Air Force Magazine*, December 1999, 58.
- Gordon, Michael R., and Gen Bernard E. Trainor. *The Generals' War*. New York, N.Y.: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.
- Hart, B. H. Liddell. *Strategy*. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1967.
- Hawkins, William R. "The Man Who Invented Limited War." *The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, vol. 4, no. 1, Autumn 1991.
- Horner, Gen Charles A. "New Era Warfare." In *The War in the Air 1914-1994*. Edited by Alan Stephens. Fairbairn, Australia: RAAF Air Power Studies Centre, March 1994.
- Ikle, Fred C. *Every War Must End*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Joint Pub 1. *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 10 January 1995.
- Joint Pub 3-0. *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 1 February 1995.
- Keaney, Thomas A., and Eliot A. Cohen. *Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Kitfield, James A. "Another Look at the Air War That Was." *Air Force Magazine*, October 1999, 39-43.
- Mann, Col Edward C. *Thunder and Lightning: Desert Storm and the Airpower Debates*. Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1995.
- McCain, Senator John. "Now That We're In, We Have to Win." *Time*, 12 April 1999, 56.
- Meilinger, Col Phillip S. "Gradual Escalation." *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1999, 18.
- Meilinger, Phillip S. *Hoyt S. Vandenberg: The Life of a General*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Powell, Colin L. *My American Journey*. New York, N.Y.: Random House, Inc., 1995.

- Priest, Dana. "Tension Grew with Divide over Strategy." *Washington Post*, 21 September 1999, 1.
- Rast, Maj Vicki J. "War Termination & Conflict Settlement: An Introduction to Concepts & Considerations." Lecture. Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., 1 November 1999.
- "Response to 'The Air War Over Serbia' Initial Report." In *Air Command and Staff College Academic Year 2000 Aerospace Operations Coursebook*, February 2000, 598-629.
- Reynolds, Col Richard T. *Heart of the Storm: The Genesis of the Air Campaign against Iraq*. Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, January 1995.
- Sigal, Leon V. *Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945*, London, U.K.: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Translated and with an introduction by Samuel B. Griffith. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- "Verbatim Special: The Balkan War." *Air Force Magazine*, June 1999, 47-51.
- "Verbatim Special: The Balkan War." *Air Force Magazine*, July 1999, 42-44.
- Warden, Col John A. *The Air Campaign*. New York, N.Y.: toExcel, 1998.
- Weaver, Lt Col Larry A, and Maj Robert D. Pollock. "Campaign Planning for the 21st Century: An Effect-Based Approach to the Planning Process." In *Air Command and Staff College Academic Year 2000 International Security and Military Studies Readings, Volume 2*, August 1999.